Vera effigies doctissimi Viri
D. IOHANNIS HALES Colleg. Eton. Socii
et Eccles. Colleg. Windesorienſis Canonici.

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A

TRACT

Concerning the

SIN

Againſt the

Holy Ghoſt.

By the ever Memorable

Mr. *JOHN HALES*,

of *Eton Colledge*, &c.

LONDON,

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SEVERAL

TRACTS,

By the ever memorable

Mr. JOHN HALES

Of *Eaton* Coll. *&c.*

VIZ.

I. Of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

II. Paraphraſe on St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel.

III. Of the Power of the Keys.

IV. Of Schiſm and Schiſmaticks, (*Never before printed by the Original Copy.*)

V. Miſcellanies.

Printed in the Year, 1677.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·
DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA

A TRACT concerning the SIN againſt the HOLY GHOST.

MAny have Written of the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and in defining or deſcribing of it, follow their own zealous conceits, and not the Canon of Holy Scriptures. The more dreadful the Sin is, the more fearful we muſt be, in charging it upon any ſpecial crime, or particular perſon. In defining a ſin of ſo heynous a nature, direct and evident proof

from Scripture is requiſite. It is not enough to conſider, (as many do) what ſins are moſt deſperate and deadly, and therefore to conclude ſuch ſins are againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Thus indeed the Schoolmen have done, who have made ſix differences of this ſin, without any ground or warrant from Scripture for ſo doing. And *Bellarmine* is ſo liberal in beſtowing on ſuch as he calls Hereticks, that his opinion is, that a Man can ſcarce be a learned Proteſtant, without committing the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Neither are the Papiſts the only Men that are miſtaken about this ſin: but too many Divines of the Reformed Churches, have ſtarted aſide from the Scripture, and have given us ſuch intricate and contradictory

V. in fine.

dictory definitions of this ſin, as tend only to the perplexing the tender Conſciences of weak Chriſtians. To make good this Cenſure, I will briefly ſet down ſo much touching this ſin, as I conceive is warranted by the Word of God, and humbly ſubmit to the judgment of the Learned.

The Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, was an evil ſpeaking of, or ſlandering of the Miracles which our Saviour did, by thoſe, who though they were convinced by the Miracles, to believe that ſuch Works could not be done, but by the power of God, yet they did malitiouſly ſay, they were wrought by the power of the Devil.

In this Definition, theſe points are obſervable.

1. I forbear to call it the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, but the Blaſphemy; for though every Blaſphemy be a ſin in general, yet our Saviour Chriſt, terms it the Blaſphemy. And the Evangeliſts do all agree, to give it the ſame term: and 'tis now here in holy Scripture called the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and yet it appears both in *St. Mathew* and *St. Mark*, that there was juſt occaſion offered to our Saviour to call it ſo; where he compares it with the ſin againſt the Son of Man; but he forbears to call it any thing, but the Blaſphemy; thereby, no doubt, to teach us, it conſiſteth only in curſed ſpeaking and Blaſpheming. A ſerious conſideration of this point, may teach us ſo much moderation, as to confine

confine our ſelves to that term which our Saviour in the three Evangeliſts hath preſcribed unto us. I cannot find that any Man that hath writ upon this Argument, hath made any obſervation, or noted this phraſe and term uſed by the Evangeliſts, in pronouncing the dreadful ſentence of our Saviour againſt the Blaſphemy of the Holy Ghoſt, I will cite theſe Texts, where it is named, *Math.* 12. 31. *Mark* 3. 28 *Luke* 12 10.

2. A ſecond Obſervation is, That Blaſphemy is a ſpeaking againſt another, as both *St. Mather* and *St. Luke* expound the word, for in the Original, it is a blaſting the Fame, or *blaming* of another; for from the Greek word Βλασφημέω both the *French*

Nation and our *Engliſh* by contraction have made the word blame.

3. To paſs from the Name to the Thing it ſelf, we may obſerve by the coherence of the Texts, that Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, was ſpoken of by our Saviour, concerning the Scribes and Phariſees. It was (ſaith *St. Mark*) becauſe the Phariſees ſaid, he had an unclean ſpirit, and that he caſt out Devils by *Belzebub*, *&c.* This ſpeech of the Phariſees, whereby they ſlandered his Miracles, wrought by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, is properly the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt. How tranſcendent a crime it was, to traduce that power by which our Saviour wrought his Miracles, may appear

pear, from the end for which theſe Miracles were wrought; which was, to prove to the people that ſaw them, that he was the *Meſſias*; which is evident from the places of Scripture, wherein he appealed to his works, 10 *Joh.* 37. 38. 14. *Joh.* 11. 11 *Math.* 4. 4. *Joh.* 29. Theſe and other places ſhew, that the working of Miracles, was an act of the moſt glorious manifeſtation of the power of God, by which at the firſt view, the ſimpleſt people were led by their outward ſenſe, to the great myſtery of inward Faith in Chriſt their Redeemer.

Therefore, for thoſe men that were eye-witneſſes of thoſe Miracles which did make them know that Chriſt was a Teacher come from

from God, to Blaſpheme that power, by which theſe Miracles were wrought, and to ſay they were done by the help of the Devil, was the moſt ſpightful and malicious ſlander that could be invented; for thereby they attempted, as much as in them lay, to deſtroy the very principles of Faith, and to prevent the very firſt propagation of the Goſpel, to the univerſal miſchief of all Mankind. And though theſe Phariſees were no Chriſtians, and therefore could not fall away from faith, which they never had, yet they did know and believe that Chriſt was a Teacher come from God; for ſo our Saviour tells them, 7 *Joh.* 28. Ye both know me, and whence I am. They did not believe him as a Saviour,

but

but as a great Prophet from God; (as the *Mahometans* do at this very day) they truſted to be ſaved by their Law, and becauſe he taught ſuch things as did abrogate their Law, in which they ſo much gloried, they were ſo malicious to his Doctrine, which they did not believe, that they ſpoke evil of his Miracles which they did believe; leaſt the people by approving his Miracles, ſhould believe his Doctrine.

4. Obſerve, that its ſaid to be Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe, by the Holy Ghoſt, the Miracles were wrought *Math.* 12 28. 1 *Cor* 12. 10.

5. The Blaſphemy againſt the Son of Man was, when men conſidered Chriſt as a mere man, and did diſgracefully tax his converſation,

verſation, by ſaying, behold a glutton, a bibber of Wine, a friend to Publicans and ſinners. But the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, was, when Men beholding Chriſts Miracles, did enviouſly aſcribe them to the Devil, which they knew and believed to be done by Gods power.

6. The Texts formerly cited out of the three Evangeliſts, being all the places wherein the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt is named; we cannot find by them, that we have any ſafe rule to conclude, that any but the Scribes and Phariſees, and their confederates, committed that ſin. I dare not ſay, that *Judas*, *Julian* the Apoſtate, or *Simon Magus*, or thoſe that ſtoned *Stephen*, were guilty thereof.

7. The

7. The Apoſtles have not in any of their Epiſtles once mentioned this Blaſphemy, and yet they were moſt careful and frequent in exhortations from all ſorts of ſin: It were much therefore if they ſhould omit or forget ſuch a fearful crime, without often and preciſe admoniſhing to beware of it. And though negative proofs from Scripture, are not demonſtrative, yet the general ſilence of the Apoſtles, may at leaſt help to infer a probability, that the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is not committable by any Chriſtian, which lived not in the time of our Saviour. As for thoſe Texts in the ſixth and tenth Chapter to the *Hebrews*, and in 1 *John* 5. 16. (which by late Divines are expoun-

expounded of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt) I do not find that the Ancient Fathers did ſo underſtand them, excepting only *St. Auſtine*, who ſo interprets that one place in *St. John*, that all men confeſs him to be in an error. There be three Texts in the Epiſtles, wherein although the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt be not named, yet, moſt think, it is intended and meant. And *Bellarmine* confuting *St. Auſtin's* opinion, who held, that final impenitency was the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt) affirms, that it ſeems the three Texts in the Epiſtles, are ſpoken of that ſin; and yet this great Cardinal forgetting what he had ſaid in the ſame Chapter contradicts himſelf, and ſhews how that thoſe

three

three places are not to be interpreted of that ſin. I will cite the Texts, and then his interpretation of them, according to the expoſition of *St. Ambroſe*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Hierom*, and other Fathers, as he ſaith.

The firſt is *Heb.* 6. It is impoſſible, *&c.* The Apoſtle here ſpeaks only of Repentance, which did go before Baptiſme, for ſo *Chryſoſtome* and *Ambroſe*, *&c.* expound it; which the Apoſtle intimates in theſe words. Which were once enlightened, that is, Baptized, for anciently, to be illuminated, ſignified to be Baptized. Secondly, in theſe words (to renew again) for we are properly renewed in Baptiſme. Thirdly, in theſe (crucifying the Son of God afreſh) for when

when we are Baptized, we are conformed to the likeneſs of his death, 6 *Rom.* And as Chriſt was only once crucified, ſo alſo we are only once Baptized; and he that will be again Baptized, ſhould again crucifie to himſelf Chriſt. Let me add this, that in the verſes next before this Text, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the foundation of Repentance, and the Doctrine of Baptiſme. And in this Text, our new Tranſlation followeth *Beza* (who hath varied from the Original, by putting the conditional *Si*, *If*, inſtead of the Copulative *Et*, *And*, and by adding the Cauſal *Ut*.) ſo that whereas *Beza* and our Tranſlation is, *ſi prolabantur ut crucifigant*, The Greek, and vulgar Latine is, καὶ παραπεσόντας ἀναςαυροῦντας, *prolapſi ſunt*

ſunt crucifigentes; for the word doth not ſignify to fall away, but to fall caſually or negligently, ſo παράπτωμα *Galat* 6. is tranſlated fault, but not falling away.

The ſecond Text is, *Hebrews* 10. 26. For if we ſin willingly or wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin. Anſwer, I ſay with *Chryſoſtom*, *Ambroſe*, and other Fathers; The ſence is, we muſt not expect another Chriſt to dye for us, or that he that dyed once, ſhould come again to dye for us.

The third Text, 1 *Joh* 5. 16. There is a ſin unto death: I do not ſay ye ſhall pray for it; *St. Hierom* ſaith, that nothing elſe is here meant, but that a Prayer for a ſin unto death, is very hard-

ly or difficultly heard; and this ſeems to be the trueſt ſenſe of this place: for *St. John* ſaith, in the verſe immediately before, we know we have the Petitions we deſire of him; therefore leaſt we ſhould think this to hold true in all Petitions even for others; he adds, if any Man ſee his Brother ſin a ſin, which is not unto death, he ſhall ask, *&c.* he ſhall ask, that is, let him ask with confidence, for he ſhall obtain; but if it be a ſin unto death, that is, a great ſin, ſuch an one as is not ordinarily pardoned, but puniſhed with death: I do not ſay, ye ſhall pray for it, that is I dare not promiſe that you ſhall eaſily obtain, and therefore I do not ſay that you ſhall pray for it, that is, with that confidence of obtaining;

ing;for often in ſuch caſes, God doth nothear the Prayers of his Saints;as God ſaith, *Jer.* 7. 16. If theſe expoſitions upon the former Texts be found, the Definition of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, cannot be grounded upon all or any of them:for as it is not named, ſo it is not meant in any of them; but if they ſeem to any to be unſound, let him bring better and more agreeable to the literal meaning and ſence, coherence and ſcope of the Text, and I ſhall gladly learn. It ſeems a probable expoſition of the firſt place, *Heb.* 6. that a learned Divine, who produceth this Text for proof of his definition of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, doth confeſs againſt himſelf, that the Apoſtle in this place denieth a ſe-

cond Baptiſme, where he ſpeaketh of Repentance, becauſe they are mentioned together in the ſame place, and have ſome affinity and correſpondence. As for the ſecond Text, *Heb.* 10. I muſt ſay, that if *St. Paul* in this place, meant the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, that then this were the only deſperate Text in the whole Bible, for what Man is there that ſins not willingly; for ſo the word ἑκουσίως properly ſignifies: *Beza* tranſlates it *ultrò*, the vulgar Latine, *voluntariè*, or willingly, not wilfully, or obſtinately. It is but a miſerable ſhift, when *St. Paul* ſaith, if we ſin willingly, for Mr *Calvin* to tell us, that the Text doth not mean every willing ſin, but only a malitious reſiſting of the Truth.

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Could not *St. Paul*, as eaſily as Mr *Calvin*, have ſaid, If we ſin malitiouſly, as ſay, if we ſin willingly? My comfort is, that if the Text be adviſedly conſidered, there is no ſuch thing as the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, or any other deſperate concluſion, to be found in the Text; the ſcope of the precedent verſes do evidently expound the Apoſtles meaning to be this, to let the *Jews* know, that the caſe was not now with them, as it was under the Law; for under the Law they had daily ſacrifice for ſin, but now under the Goſpel they had but one ſacrifice, once for all; every Prieſt ſtandeth daily miniſtring and offering often times the ſame ſacrifice, but this Man after he had offered one

ſacrifice, for ever ſate down at the right hand of God, as it is, verſe 11. of that Chapter, which may ſerve for a comment upon the Verſe now in queſtion. And it is worth our noting, that the Text doth not ſay, if we ſin wilfully, there is no ſacrifice for ſin; this had been an hard ſaying indeed; but the words are, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin: there is ſome comfortable difference, I hope, between theſe two propoſitions; there is no ſacrifice, and there remains no more ſacrafice for ſin: So that if we do not believe in that one ſacrifice, as ſufficient, but look every day for ſome new ſacrifice for every new ſin, we muſt expect nothing but judgment.

As to the third place, 1 *Joh.* 5. 16.

5. 16. many would conclude, there is a ſin for which we may not pray; Firſt, becauſe it is irremiſſable, and this they think muſt needs be the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, meant by *St. John*, Their beſt argument is, *John's* not ſaying we ſhould pray, is a ſaying we ſhould not pray; his ſilence to them is prohibition. This is bad Grammar, and worſe Logick. For we find, that *St. Stephen* prayed for them that ſtoned him, and yet told them they reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt. And *St. Peter* exhorted *Simon Magus* to Repentance, and yet both he and thoſe that ſtoned *Stephen*, are commonly reputed ſinners againſt the Holy Ghoſt. *St. Ambroſe* is of that charitable opinion, that he thinks the ſin againſt the

Holy Ghoſt may be pardoned by Repentance, becauſe the people of the *Jews*, that had ſaid of Chriſt, that he caſt out Devils by *Belzebub*, afterwards at the preaching of *St. Peter*, are ſaid to be converted, *Acts* 2. *St. Auſtine* in a Retract concludes, we muſt deſpair of no Man, no not of the wickedeſt, as long as he liveth; and we ſafely pray for him, of whom we don't deſpair. For though it be expreſly ſaid, That the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven, yet theſe words may juſtly receive a qualification, if we will but allow the ſame mitigation of theſe words, which all Men confeſs we muſt needs allow to the precedent words in the ſame verſe, to which theſe have relation; where

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it is ſaid generally, all Sins, and all Blaſphemies ſhall be forgiven, it cannot be meant of all ſins always, and to all Men, for then no ſin could be damnable, but the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which is moſt falſe; and therefore the meaning muſt be, all ſins ſhall be forgiven ordinarily, and for the moſt part; ſo on the contrary, Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not ordinarily, but hardly be forgiven. Even thoſe who are moſt ſtrict to maintain the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, to be unpardonable, will yet acknowledge, that ſometimes in Scripture, Impoſſibility is uſed to note a difficulty, and thoſe things are ſpoken indefinitely to all, which belong but to a part only. Thus the difficulty of a rich

rich Mans entering into the Kingdome of Heaven, is preſented to us by our Saviour, under the ſimilitude of an impoſſibility.

Having diſpatch'd theſe Texts of Scripture which do either name, or are thought to concern, the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it remains to examine thoſe common Definitions of this ſin which are now current; though different in the terms by which they define it; ſome call it a total or final falling away from faith, or a wilful Apoſtacy, or a malicious reſiſting of the truth; yet when they come to explain their meaning, the difference among them is not conſiderable. I ſhall chiefly apply my ſelf to Mr *Calvin's* definition, becauſe his judgment hath gained

ed the greateſt reputation among the multitude; as alſo, for that he himſelf promiſes ſuch a true definition, as ſhall eaſily, by it ſelf overthrow all the reſt. In his *Inſtitut. Lib. 2. Chap.* 3. he ſaith, they ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, *Qui divinæ veritati (cujus fulgore ſic perſtringuntur ut ignorantiam cauſari nequeunt) tamen deſtinata malitia reſiſtunt, in hoc tantum, ut reſiſtant.* *Arminius* alſo uſeth Mr *Calvins* words. The Rhetorical Parentheſis, which might well have been ſpared in a definition, being reduced to plain and brief terms; this definition of *Calvin* may be thus Engliſhed, They ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, who of determined malice, reſiſt the known Truth of God, to the end only to reſiſt. In this

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Mr *Calvin* doth not define what the ſin is, but who they are that commit it; whereas by the Rules of Logick, *Concretes* admit of no definition, but only *Abſtracts*. But taking the definition as it is, it conſiſts principally upon theſe three terms. Firſt, Truth; Secondly, Known; Thirdly, Reſiſted; or a reſiſting of the known Truth. The words being general and doubtful, we will conſider them ſingly.

Firſt, If by the truth Mr *Calvin* underſtands the Word of God, or the whole Doctrine revealed in the Scriptures, then the ſenſe of this Term will be too large: for even the Phariſees which ſpoke againſt the Holy Ghoſt, did not reſiſt the whole Truth of God in the Scripture, for

for they believed in the Law of *Moſes*, and had confidence to be ſaved by the keeping of it. And in defence of that Law, (as they thought) they did Blaſpheme the Holy Ghoſt. Therefore properly by the Truth of God, Mr *Calvin* muſt confine his meaning to the Truth of the Goſpel or Doctrine of Faith, for ſo both he himſelf and others expound themſelves, by terming the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, a falling away, or turning away from Faith, or Apoſtacy.

Secondly, By this word Known, Mr *Calvin* muſt mean belief, for Faith is properly by believing, not knowing the truth.

Thirdly, The Word, Reſiſting, muſt mean unbelieving: for if receiving of the Truth be by be-

belief, then Reſiſting of the Truth muſt be unbelief. And indeed Mr. *Calvin* explains himſelf in the ſame Chapter, ſaying, there is no place for pardon where knowledge is joyned with unbelief, *Non eſſe veniæ locum*, &c. So then by this definition, to reſiſt the known Truth, is all one, as if Mr *Calvin* had ſaid in proper terms, for a Man at once to unbelieve that which he doth believe; which two things it is impoſſible to do together? and if they be not together, there can be no reſiſtance. It is true, that for ſome reaſons, a Man may be brought, not to believe that which he formerly believed. This cannotbe in an inſtant, but ſucceſſively unbelief comes in the place of belief. And this

may

may not be called a reſiſting, for that all reſiſtance conſiſts in a violence between two at the leaſt; but where two ſucceed one another, and are never together, it cannot poſſibly be. I confeſs a Man may reſiſt the Truth, when it is a Truth, in it ſelf only, or in the underſtanding of ſome other; but to reſiſt the Truth which is known, and believed by the reſiſter himſelf, is a direct contradiction; for the nature of Truth is ſuch, that if the underſtanding apprehend it for Truth, it cannot but aſſent unto it. No Man can force himſelf to believe what he liſts, or when he liſts. Sometimes a Man knows not what to believe, but finds a ſuſpenſion of his Faith, or trepidation

tion of his underſtanding, not knowing which way to turn. This cannot be called a reſiſting of the Truth, when the Truth is not known, but doubted of. Again, ſome Truths there be, though they be aſſented to by the underſtanding for Truths, yet they are not deſired as good; for truth is one degree nearer the Soul of Man than goodneſs. The Phariſees did apprehend the Miracles of our Saviour as true, but not as good; becauſe they tended to the derogation of their Law, which they eſteemed a better Truth. And for this cauſe, they Blaſphemed that Truth, which in their hearts they believed for Truth. For the truth of words, or ſpeech, is, (as the Schools ſay) nothing elſe but the

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ſign of truth, not truth it ſelf; for truth it ſelf is ſeated in the underſtanding, and not in the ſpeech. That Truth which the underſtanding aſſents to, the ſpeech may affirm to be falſe; there are many things believed in deed, which are denied in word: but ſuch a denial is not reſiſting, but only making ſhew of reſiſting, the Truth; for reſiſtance muſt be in the ſame place where Truth is; Truth being ſeated in the underſtanding, reſiſtance muſt be placed there alſo; the underſtanding can reſiſt no Truth, but by unbelieving of it. If Mr *Calvin* had intended of the Truth only in word, he had come one ſtep nearer to the Truth of Scripture, but he was not ſo happy in the expreſſion of

his meaning: nay his terms of Incredulity, Apoſtacy, falling away, &c. relate to a real, not verbal, Apoſtacy, and Unbelief. It remains then to my underſtanding, that Mr *Calvin* makes the reſiſtance of the Truth to be a not believing of what we do believe; which being a contradiction, he defines the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, to be ſuch a Sin, as no Man poſſibly can commit. And yet in the other extream, in expounding his own definition, he makes it ſuch a Sin, as no Man living but commits; for by his Doctrine, (as I take it) any Sin may be the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. His words are theſe, *Quorum convicta eſt conſcientia verbum Dei eſſe quod repudiant & impugnant, impugnare*

pugnare tamen non deſiſtant, illi in ſpiritum blaſphemari dicuntur.

What Man is there that doth not daily, in ſome Point or other, forſake the word of God, and ceaſes not to impugne it, and is convinced thereof in his Conſcience: I know Mr *Calvin* was far from thinking, that *St. Paul*, did Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and yet *St. Paul* it ſeems was convinced in his Conſcience, that it was the Word of God he fought againſt, and yet ceaſed not to fight againſt it, when he ſaith, he delighted in the Law of God, yet another Law warring againſt the Law of his mind, brought him into Captivity of the Law of Sin. What dangerous conſequences weak Conſciences may draw to themſelves,

out of this unbridled, unlimited propoſition of Mr *Calvins*, let others judge. There is a juſt cauſe I preſume to except againſt Mr *Calvin*, and all others, who in this concurr with him, to omit the term of Blaſphemy in their definitions; for this is perpetually obſerved by our Saviour in his ſpeech concerning this Sin, by the Evangeliſts with one conſent: but inſtead of the word Blaſphemy, he hath brought in the word, reſiſt, for a Genus of this Sin; but by what Authority I know not; I cannot find it, or the equivalent to it, in any of theſe places, which are thought to touch this Sin. I find only falling away mentioned, *Heb.* 6. which phraſe is uſed by Mr *Calvin*, for reſiſting; whereas falling

ling away, and reſiſting, are no more alike, than fighting and running away, which are little leſs than contraries. The laſt point I ſhall touch in Mr *Calvins* definition, is, where he ſaith, the Sinners againſt the Holy Ghoſt reſiſt, to the end only that they may reſiſt; and yet withall he tells, they reſiſt out of a determinate malice. If they reſiſt out of malice, then the end for which they reſiſt, is for the ſatisfaction of their malice. The Phariſees here condemned by our Saviour, had an other end than bare reſiſting. The defence of the Law of *Moſes*, was the end for which they Blaſphemed, and not any pleaſure they could have in the bare and ſimple act of reſiſtance. We find three old opini-

opinions, concerning the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, but they were long ſince exploded; I will but only name them. *Origen* thought, all Sins committed after Baptiſme, were Sins againſt the Holy Ghoſt: his reaſon was only a witleſs conceit of his own, That God the Father was in all things, the Son only in all reaſonable Creatures, the Holy Ghoſt in all regenerate Men. Therefore when Men Sin againſt the Divine Perſon, which is in them, if they be Heathen, they Sin againſt God the Father, or Son; if they be Chriſtians, they Sin againſt God the Holy Goſt; but this opinion is falſe. The *Novatian* Hereticks agreed with *Origen* in opinion, for they denied remiſſion of Sins to any that fell, thinking

ing all falls of Chriſtians to be Sins againſt the Holy Ghoſt; but this opinion is falſe; elſe all Sins were unpardonable to Chriſtians. Yet we find *St. Paul*, to remit the Sins of the inceſtuous *Corinthian*.

Our Saviour alſo chargeth the Phariſees with this, who were no Chriſtians. *St. Auſtin* thought final impenitency to be the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; but final impenitency is no Blaſphemy, but only a general circumſtance, that may accompany any Sin: beſides, our Saviour intends, that this Sin may be found in this life. And the Phariſees were alive when they were accuſed of it. *Pet. Lumbard*, and *Tho. Aquinas*, thought Sins of Malice, to be Sins againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and Sins of infirmity againſt the Father, and Sins of ignorance

norance againſt the Son. This opinion is falſe, becauſe the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, muſt be a Sin of ſome certain Blaſphemy, but malice is no certain Sin, but a General, and 'tis not always a Blaſphemy.

The ſix differences the Schoolmen make of the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, are theſe;

1. Envying of our Brothers Graces; 2. Impugning of the Known Truth; 3. Deſperation; 4. Obſtinacy; 5. Preſumption; 6. Final Impenitency.

In this determination of the point of Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and the inquiry made into Mr *Calvins* and others new definition; I hope I have delivered nothing contrary to the Articles of the Church of *England*.

FINIS.

A

TRACT

Concerning the

SACRAMENT

OF THE

Lords Supper.

By the ever Memorable

Mr. *JOHN HALES*,

of *Eaton-Colledge*, &c.

Printed, 1677.

A Tract on the Sacrament *of the* LORDS SUPPER.

Kind SIR,

IN peruſal of your Letters together with the Schedule incloſed, no Circumſtance did ſo much move me, as this, that ſo ordinary Points as are diſcuſt there, and that in a bare and ordinary manner, ſhould amuſe either your ſelf or any man elſe, that pretends to ordinary Knowledge in Controverſies in Chriſtian Religion. For the Points therein

diſcuſt are no other than the ſubject of every common Pamphlet, and ſufficiently known (that I may ſo ſay) in every Barbers Shop. Yet becauſe you require my Opinion of matters there in queſtion, I willingly afford it you, though I fear I ſhall more amuſe you with telling you the Truth, than the Diſputants there did, by abuſing you with Error. For the plain and neceſſary (though perhaps unwelcome) Truth is, that in the greater part of the Diſpute, both parties much miſtook themſelves, and that fell out which is in the cõmon Proverb, *ſc. Whilſt the one milks the Ram, the other holds under the Sieve.* That you may ſee this Truth with your Eyes, I divide your whole Diſpute into two Heads; the one concerning the *Euchariſt*, the other concerning

cerning the *Churches miſtaking it ſelf about Fundamentals.*

For the *firſt*, It conſiſteth of two parts; of a Propoſition, and of a Reply: The Propoſition expreſſes (at leaſt he that made it intended it ſo to do, though he miſtakes) the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, concerning the preſence of Chriſt in the *Euchariſt*. The Reply doth the like for the Church of *Rome* in the ſame Argument. Now that you may ſee how indifferently I walk, I will open the miſtakes of both parties, that ſo the truth of the thing it ſelf (being unclouded of Errors) may the more clearly ſhine forth.

The firſt miſtake common to both is, That they ground themſelves much upon the words of Conſecration, as they are called,

and ſuppoſe, That upon the pronouncing of thoſe words, ſomething befalls that action, which otherwiſe would not; and that without thoſe words the action were lame. *Sir*, I muſt confeſs my ignorance unto you. I find no ground for the neceſſity of this doing. Our Saviour inſtituting that Holy Ceremony, commands us to do what he did, leaves us no Precept of ſaying any words; neither will it be made appear, that either the bleſſed Apoſtles, or Primitive Chriſtians had any ſuch Cuſtom: Nay the contrary will be made probably to appear out of ſome of the antienteſt Writings of the Churches Ceremonials. Our Saviour indeed uſed the Words, but it was to expreſs what his meaning was; had he barely act-

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ed the thing, without expreſſing himſelf by ſome ſuch Form of Words, we could never have known what it was he did. But what neceſſity is there now of ſo doing? for when the Congregation is met together, to the breaking of Bread and Prayer, and ſee Bread and Wine upon the Communion Table, is there any man can doubt of the meaning of it, although the Canon be not read? It was the farther ſolemnizing, and beautifying that holy action which brought the Canon in; and not an opinion of adding any thing to the ſubſtance of the action. For that the words were uſed by our Saviour to work any thing upon the Bread and Wine, can never out of Scripture or Reaſon be deduced; and beyond theſe two, I have no

ground for my Religion, neither in Subſtance nor in Ceremony. The main Foundation that upholds the neceſſity of this form of action now in uſe, is Church-Cuſtom and Church-Error.

Now for that Topique place of Church-Cuſtom, it is generally too much abuſed: For whereas naturally the neceſſity of the thing ought to give warrant to the practice of the Church; I know not by what device matters are turned about, and the cuſtomary practice of the Church is alledged to prove the neceſſity of the thing; as if things had received their Original from the Church-Authority, and not as the truth is, from an higher Hand. As for the Churches Error, on which I told you this Form of action is founded, it conſiſts in the

the uncautelous taking up an unſound ungrounded concluſion of the Fathers for a religious Maxim. St. *Ambroſe*, I trow, was he that ſaid it, and poſterity hath too generally applauded it, *Accedat verbum ad elementum, & fiat Sacramentum.* By which they would perſwade us, againſt all experience, that to make up a Sacrament, there muſt be ſomething ſaid and ſomething done; whereas indeed to the perfection of a Sacrament, or holy Myſtery (for both theſe are one) it is ſufficient that one thing be done whereby another is ſignified, though nothing be ſaid at all. When *Tarquinius* was walking in his Garden, a Meſſenger came and asked him, what he would have done unto the Town of *Gabij*, then newly taken? He anſwered nothing,

thing. But with his Wand ſtruck off the tops of the higheſt *Popies*; and the Meſſenger underſtanding his meaning, cut off the Heads of the chief of the City. Had this been done in *Sacris*, it had been forthwith truly a Sacrament, or holy Myſtery. *Cum in omnibus Scientiis voces ſignificent res, hoc habet proprium Theologia, quòd ipſæ res ſignificatæ per voces, etiam ſignificent aliquid*, ſaith *Aquinas*; and upon the ſecond ſignification are all Spiritual and myſtical ſenſes founded: So that *in Sacris*, a Myſtery or Sacrament is then acted, when one thing is done and another is ſignified, as it is in the Holy Communion, though nothing be ſaid at all. The ancient Sacrifices of the *Jews*, whether weekly, monethly, or yearly, their Paſſover, their ſitting in Boothes,

&c.

&c. Theſe were all Sacraments, yet we find not any ſacred forms of words, uſed by the Prieſts or People in the execution of them.

To ſum up that which we have to ſay in this Point, the calling upon the words of conſecration in the Euchariſt, is too weakly founded to be made argumentative, for the action is perfect, whether thoſe words be uſed or forborn: And in truth to ſpeak my opinion, I ſee no great harm could enſue, were they quite omitted. Certainly thus much good would follow, that ſome part (though not a little one) of the ſuperſtition that adheres to that action, by reaſon of an ungrounded conceit of the neceſſity and force of the words in it, would forthwith pill off and fall away: I would not have you underſtand

derſtand me ſo, as if I would preſcribe for, or deſire the diſuſe of the words; only two things I would commend to you, Firſt, That the uſe of the Canon is a thing indifferent. And, Secondly, That in this knack of making Sacraments, Chriſtians have taken a greater liberty than they can well juſtify: Firſt, In forging Sacraments, more than God (for ought doth or can appear) did ever intend: And Secondly, In adding to the Sacraments inſtituted of God many formalities, and ceremonial circumſtances upon no warrant but their own; which circumſtances by long uſe, begat in the minds of men a conceit, that they were eſſential parts of that to which indeed they were but appendant; and that only by the device of

ſome

ſome who practiſed a power in the Church morethan was convenient.

Thus much for the firſt common miſtake.

The Second is worſe than it; You ſee that both parts agreed in the acknowledgment of the real preſence of the Body of Chriſt in the Euchariſt, though they differ in the manner of his Preſence, and application of himſelf to the receiver; though the Proteſtant Diſputant ſeems to have gone a little beyond his Leader: Had he expreſt himſelf in the point of Bread and Wine, what became of it, whether it remain'd in its proper nature yea or no, I could the better have fathom'd him: Now theſe words of his, that the Bread and Wine after conſecration are truly and really the Body of Chriſt, howſoever

ever they are ſuppled and allayed with that clauſe, *not after a carnal, but after a ſpiritual manner*, yet ſtill remain too crude and raw, and betray the Speaker for a *Lutheran* at leaſt, if not for a favourer of the Church of *Rome*; for as for that Phraſe, *of a ſpiritual manner*, which ſeems to give ſeaſon and moderation to his concluſion, it can yield him but ſmall relief: For firſt, To ſay the fleſh of Chriſt is in the Bread, but *not after a carnal manner*, is but the ſame nonſence, which the Divines of *Rome* put upon us on the like occaſion, when telling us, that the Blood of Chriſt is really ſacrificed, and ſhed in the Sacrament, they add by way of Gloſs, that it is done *incruentè*, unbloodily; by the like Analogy they may tell us, if they pleaſe, that

that the body of Chriſt is there incorporated unbodily, Fleſh not carnally may paſs the Preſs jointly the next Edition of the Book of Bulls. Again, in another reſpect, That clauſe, *of a ſpiritual manner* doth your Proteſtant Diſputer but little ſervice, if any at all; for the Catholick Diſputant contriving with himſelf how to ſeat the Body of God in the Euchariſt, as may be moſt for his eaſe, tells us, that he is there as Spirits and glorified Bodies (which St. *Paul* calls *ſpiritual*) are in the places they poſſeſs; ſo then, the one tells you the Body of Chriſt is there really, but ſpiritually; the other, that he is there really, but as a Spirit in a place; and what now, I pray you, is the difference between them? By the way, in the paſſage you may ſee what

what account to make of your Catholick Diſputer. *Ariſtotle*, and with him common ſenſe, tells us thus much, *That he that compares two Bodies together, muſt know them both*; Doth this Gentleman know any thing concerning the ſite and locality of Spirits, and Bodies glorified? if he doth, let him do us the courteſy as to ſhew us, at what price he purchaſed that degree of knowledg, that ſo we may try our Credit, and ſee if we can buy it at the ſame rate; *Tertius è Cælo cecidit Cato?* Is he like a ſecond *Paul*, lately deſcended out of the third Heavens, and there hath made us the diſcovery? for by what other means he could attain to that knowledg, my dulneſs cannot ſuggeſt. But if he doth not know (as indeed he neither doth

doth nor can, for there is no means left to make diſcovery that way) then with what congruity can he tell us that the Body of Chriſt is in the Bread, as Spirits, and glorified Bodies are in their places, if he know not what manner of location and ſite, Spirits and glorified Bodies have? I ſhall not need to prompt your diſcretion thus far, as that you ought not to make dainties of ſuch fruitleſs and deſperate Diſputers; who, as the Apoſtle notes, thruſt themſelves into things they have not ſeen, and upon a falſe ſhew of knowledge, abuſe eaſie Hearers, and of things they know not, adventure to ſpeak they know not what.

To return then, and conſider a little more of this ſecond miſtake common to both your Diſputants,

I will deal as favourably as I can with your Proteſtant Diſputer; for though I think he miſtakes himſelf (for I know no Proteſtant that teacheth, that the common Bread, after the word ſpoken is really made the Body of Chriſt) yet he might well take occaſion thus to erre out of ſome Proteſtant Writings: For generally the Reformed Divines do falſly report that Holy Action, whether you regard the Eſſence or Uſe thereof.

For firſt, if in regard of the Eſſence, ſome Proteſtants, and that of chief note, ſtick not to ſay, That the words of Conſecration are not a meer *Trope*, and from hence it muſt needs follow, that in ſome ſence they muſt needs be taken literally, which is enough to plead authority for the Gentlemans Error.

ror. But that which they preach concerning a real preſence and participation of Chriſts Body in the Sacrament; they expound not by a ſuppoſal that the Bread becomes Gods Body, but that together with the Sacramental Elements, there is conveighed into the Soul of the worthy Receiver, the very Body and Blood of God, but after a ſecret, ineffable, and wonderfull manner. From hence, as I take it, have proceeded theſe crude ſpeeches of the Learned of the Reformed parts, ſome dead, ſome living, wherein they take upon them to aſſure the Divines of *Rome*, that we acknowledge a Real Preſence as well as they; but for the manner how, *con*, or *trans*, or *ſub*, or *in*, ἐπέχομεν, we play the *Scepticks*, and determine not. This conceit, be-

ſides the falſhood of it, is a meer novelty, neither is it to be found in the Books of any of the Antients, till *Martin Bucer* roſe. He out of an unſeaſonable baſhfulneſs, and fear to ſeem to recede too far from the Church of *Rome*, taught to the purpoſe now related, concerning the Doctrine of Chriſt's Preſence in the Sacrament; and from him it deſcended into the Writings of *Calvin* and *Beza*, whoſe Authority have well-near ſpread it over the face of the Reformed Churches. This is an Error which, as I ſaid, touches the Eſſence of that holy Action; but there are many now which touch the end and uſe of it, which are practiſed by the Reformed parts; for out of an extravagant fancy they have of it, they abuſe it to many ends,

of

of which we may think the firſt Inſtituter (ſave that he was God, and knew all things) never thought of: For we make it an Arbitrator of Civil buſineſſes; and imploy it in ending Controverſies; and for Confirmation of what we ſay or do, we commonly promiſe to take the Sacrament upon it; we teach, that it confirms our Faith in Chriſt, whereas indeed the receiving of it is a ſign of Faith confirmed, and men come to it to teſtifie that they do believe, not to procure that they may believe: For if a Man doubt of the truth of Chriſtianity, think you that his ſcruples would be removed upon the receiving of the Sacrament? I would it were ſo; we ſhould not have ſo many doubting Chriſtians, who yet receive

the Sacrament oft enough: We teach it to be *Viaticum morientium*, whereby we abuſe many diſtreſſed Conſciences, and ſick Bodies, who ſeek for comfort there, and finding it not, conclude from thence (I ſpeak what I know) ſome defect in their Faith. The participation of this Sacrament to ſick and weak perſons, what unſeemly events hath it occaſioned, the vomiting up of the Elements anon, upon the receipt of them, the reſurging the Wine into the Cup, before the Miniſter could remove his hand to the interruption of the action? Now all theſe Miſtakes and Errors have riſen upon ſome ungrounded and fond practices, crept long ſince (God knows how) into the Church, and as yet not ſufficiently purged out. I will

be

be bold to inform you what it is, which is πρῶτον ψεῦδος, the main fundamental fallacy, whence all theſe abuſes have ſprung. There hath been a fancy of long ſubſiſtance in the Churches, that in the Communion there is ſomething given beſides Bread and Wine, of which *the Numerality* given, men have not yet agreed; Some ſay it is the Body of God into which the Bread is tranſubſtantiated; Some ſay it is the ſame Body with which the Bread is conſubſtantiated; Some, that the Bread remaining what it was, there paſſes with it to the Soul the real Body of God, in a ſecret unknown manner; Some, that a further degree of Faith is ſupplied us; Others, that ſome degree of Gods grace, whatever it be, is exhibited, which

otherwiſe would be wanting: All which variety of conceits muſt needs fall out, as having no other ground, but conjecture weakly founded. To ſettle you therefore in your Judgment, both of the thing it ſelf, and of the true uſe of it, I will commend to your conſideration theſe few Propoſitions.

Firſt, In the Communion, there is nothing given but Bread, and Wine.

Secondly, The Bread and Wine are ſigns indeed, but not of any thing there exhibited, but of ſomewhat given long ſince, even of Chriſt given for us upon the Croſs ſixteen hundred years ago, and more.

Thirdly, Jeſus Chriſt is eaten at the Communion Table in no ſence neither

neither Spiritually, by virtue of any thing done there, nor really, neither Metaphorically, nor Literally. Indeed that which is eaten (I mean the Bread) is called Chriſt by a Metaphor; but it is eaten truly and properly.

Fourthly, The Spiritual eating of Chriſt is common to all places, as well as the Lord's Table.

Laſt of all, The Uſes and Ends of the Lord's Supper can be no more than ſuch as are mentioned in the Scriptures, and they are but two.

Firſt, The commemoration of the Death and Paſſion of the Son of God, ſpecified by himſelf at the Inſtitution of the Ceremony.

Secondly, To teſtify our Union with Chriſt, and Communion one with another; which end St. *Paul* hath taught us. In

In theſe few Concluſions the whole Doctrine and Uſe of the Lord's Supper is fully ſet down; and whoſo leadeth you beyond this, doth but abuſe you. *Quicquid ultra quæritur, non intelligitur.* The proof of theſe Propoſitions would require more than the Limits of a Letter will admit of; and I ſee my ſelf already to have exceeded theſe Bounds. I will therefore paſs away to conſider the ſecond part of your Letter.

In this ſecond Part, I would you had pleaſed to have done as in the firſt you did, That is, not only ſet down the Propoſition of the Catholick, but ſome Anſwer of the Proteſtant, by which we might have diſcovered his Judgement; I might perchance have uſed the ſame

ſame Liberty as I have done before, namely diſcovered the miſſtakes of both parties; for I ſuſpect that as there they did, ſo here they would have given me cauſe enough. Now I content my ſelf barely to ſpeak to the Queſtion. The Queſtion is, *Whether the Church may Err in Fundamentals?* By the *Church* I will not trifle as your Catholick doth, and mean only the Proteſtant Party, as he profeſſeth he doth only the *Roman Faction.* But I ſhall underſtand all Factions in Chriſtianity, All that entitle themſelves to Chriſt, whereſoever diſperſed all the World over.

Firſt, I Anſwer, That every Chriſtian may err that will: for if men might not err willfully, then there could be no Hereſie; Hereſie being nothing elſe but wilful Error:

Error : For if we account miſtakes befalling us through humane Frailties to be Hereſies, then it will follow, That every man ſince the Apoſtles time was an Heretick ; for never yet was there any Chriſtian, the Apoſtles only excepted, which did not in ſomething concerning the Chriſtian Faith miſtake himſelf, either by addition or omiſſion, or miſinterpretation of ſomething. An evident ſign of this Truth you may ſee in this by the Providence of God: the Writings of many learned Chriſtians from the Spring of Chriſtianity, have been left unto poſterity, and amongſt all thoſe, ſcarcely any is to be found who is not confeſt on all hands to have miſtaken ſome things, and thoſe miſtakes for the moſt part ſtand upon Record by ſome who pur-

purpoſely obſerved them. Neither let this (I beſeech you) beget in you a conceit as if I meant to diſgrace thoſe whoſe Labours have been and are of infinite benefit in the Church. For if *Ariſtotle*, and *Aphrodiſeus*, and *Galen*, and the reſt of thoſe Excellent men whom God had indued with extraordinary portions of natural Knowledge, have with all thankful and ingenious men throughout all Generations retained their Credit entire, notwithſtanding it is acknowledged that they have all of them in many things, ſwerved from the Truth; Then, why ſhould not Chriſtians expreſs the ſame ingenuity to thoſe who have laboured before us in the Expoſition of the Chriſtian Faith, and highly eſteem them for their Works ſake, their many

many infirmities notwithſtanding? You will ſay, that for private perſons it is confeſt they may and daily do err; But can Chriſtians err by whole Shoals, by Armies meeting for defence of the Truth in Synods and Councils, eſpecially General, which are countenanced by the great Fable of all the World, the Biſhop of *Rome*?

I anſwer, To ſay that Councils may not err, though private perſons may, at firſt ſight is a merry ſpeech; as if a man ſhould ſay, That every ſingle Souldier indeed may run away, but a whole Army cannot, eſpecially having *Hannibal* for their Captain; and ſince it is confeſt, that all ſingle perſons not only may, but do err, it will prove a very hard matter, to gather out of theſe a multitude, of whom being

ing gathered together, we may be ſecured they cannot err. I muſt for mine own part confeſs, that Councils, and Synods not only may and have erred, but conſidering the means how they are managed, it were a great marvel if they did not err: For what men are they of whom thoſe great Meetings do conſiſt? are they the beſt, the moſt learned, the moſt vertuous, the moſt likely to walk uprightly? No, the greateſt, the moſt ambitious, and many times men, neither of Judgment, nor Learning; ſuch are they of whom theſe Bodies do conſiſt: and are theſe men in common equity likely to determine for Truth? *Qui ut in vita, ſic in cauſis, ſpes quoque improbas alunt*, as *Quintilian* ſpeaks. Again, when ſuch perſons are thus

thus met, their way to proceed to concluſion, is not by weight of Reaſon, but by multitude of Votes and Suffrages; as if it were a maxim in nature, that the greater part muſt needs be the better; whereas our common experience ſhews, That, *Nunquam ita bene agitur cum rebus humanis ut plures ſint meliores.* It was never heard in any profeſſion, that Concluſion of Truth went by plurality of Voices, the Chriſtian profeſſion only excepted; and I have often muſed how it comes to paſs, that the way which in all other Sciences is not able to warrant the pooreſt Concluſion, ſhould be thought ſufficient to give authority to Concluſions in Divinity, the Supream Empreſs of Sciences. But I ſee what it is that is uſually pleaded, and with your leave

leave I will a little conſider of it.

It is given out, that Chriſtian meetings have ſuch an aſſiſtance of God, and his bleſſed Spirit, that let their perſons be what they will, they may aſſure themſelves againſt all poſſibility of miſtaking; and this is that they ſay, which to this way of ending Controverſies, which in all other Sciences is ſo contemptible, gives a determining to Theological Diſputes of ſo great Authority. And this muſick of the Spirit is ſo pleaſing, that it hath taken the Reformed Party too; For with them likewiſe all things at length end in the Spirit; but with this difference, that thoſe of *Rome* confine the Spirit to the Biſhops and Counſels of *Rome*, but the Proteſtant enlargeth this working of the Spirit,

and makes it the Director of private meditations. I ſhould doubtleſs do great injury to the goodneſs of God, if I ſhould deny the ſufficient aſſiſtance of God to the whole world, to preſerve them both from ſin in their Actions, and damnable errors in their opinions; much more ſhould I do it, if I denied it to the Church of God; but this aſſiſtance of God may very well be, and yet men may fall into ſin and errors. St. *Paul* preaching to the *Gentiles*, tells them that God was with them in ſo palpable a manner, that even by groping they might have found him, yet both he and we know what the *Gentiles* did. Chriſt hath promiſed his perpetual aſſiſtance to his Church; but hath he left any Propheſie, that the Church ſhould

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perpetually adhere to him? if any man think he hath, it is his part to inform us, where this Propheſy is to be found. That matters may go well with men, two things muſt concur, the aſſiſtance of God to men, and the adherence of men to God; if either of theſe be deficient, there will be little good done. Now the firſt of theſe is never deficient, but the ſecond is very often; ſo that the Promiſe of Chriſts perpetual preſence made unto the Church, infers not at all any preſumption of Infallibility. As for that term of Spirit which is ſo much taken up, to open the danger that lurks under it, we muſt a little diſtinguiſh upon the Word. This term [*Spirit of God,*] either ſignifies the third Perſon in the bleſſed Trinity,

or elſe the wonderful power of Miracles, of Tongues, of Healing, &c, which was given to the Apoſtles, and other of the Primitive Chriſtians, at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, but both theſe meanings are ſtrangers to our purpoſe; The Spirit of God, as it concerns the Queſtion here in hand, ſignifies either ſomething within us, or ſomething without us; Without us, it ſignifies the written Word, recorded in the Books of the Prophets, Apoſtles, and Evangeliſts, which are metonymically called the Spirit, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt ſpake thoſe things by their mouths when they lived, and now ſpeaks unto us by their pens when they are dead. If you pleaſe to receive it, this alone is left as Chriſts Vicar in his abſence,

ſence, to give us directions both in our actions and opinions; he that tells you of another Spirit in the Church to direct you in your way, may as well tell you a tale of a Puck, or a walking Spirit in the Church-Yard. But that this Spirit ſpeaking without us may be beneficial to us, *oportet aliquid intus eſſe*, there muſt be ſomething within us, which alſo we call the Spirit; and this is twofold; For either it ſignifies a ſecret Illapſe, or ſupernatural Influence of God upon the hearts of men, by which he is ſuppoſed inwardly, to incline, inform, and direct men in their ways, and wills, and to preſerve them from ſin and miſtake; or elſe it ſignifies that in us, which is oppoſed againſt the fleſh, & which denominates us ſpiritual men, and

by which we are ſaid *to walk according to the Spirit*; that which St. *Paul* means, when he tells us, *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh,* (Rom. 7.) *ſo that we may not do what we liſt.* Now of theſe two, the former it is, which the Church ſeems to appeal unto in determining Controverſies by way of Counſel: But to this I have little to ſay. *Firſt*, Becauſe I know not whether there be any ſuch thing yea, or no. *Secondly* Becauſe experience ſhews, that the pretence of the Spirit in this ſence is very dangerous, as being next at hand to give countenance to impoſture and abuſe: which is a thing ſufficiently ſeen, and acknowledged both by the Papiſt and Proteſtant Party; as it appears by this, that though both pretend unto it, yet both

both upbraid each other with the pretence of it. But the Spirit in the ſecond ſence, is that I contend for; and this is nothing but the Reaſon illuminated by Revelation out of the written Word. For when the Mind and Spirit humbly conform and ſubmit to the written Will of God, then you are properly ſaid to have the Spirit of God, and to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the Fleſh. This alone is that Spirit which preſerves us frō ſtraying from the Truth; For he indeed that hath the Spirit, errs not at all, or if he do, it is with as little hazard and danger as may be; which is the higheſt point of Infallibility, which either private Perſons or Churches can arrive unto. Yet would I not have you to conceive that I deny that at this day the Holy Ghoſt

communicateshimſelfto anyin this ſecret and ſupernatural manner, as in foregoing times He had been wont to do; indeed my own many uncleanneſſes are ſufficient reaſons to hinder that good Spirit to participate himſelf unto me, after that manner. The Holy Ghoſt was pleaſed to come down like a Dove; *Veniunt ad candida tecta Columbæ. Accipiet nullas ſordida Turris Aves.* Now it is no reaſon to conclude the Holy Ghoſt imparts himſelfin this manner to none, becauſe he hath not done that favour unto me. But thus much I will ſay, that the benefit of that ſacred Influence is confined to thoſe happy Souls in whom it is, and cannot extend it ſelf to the Church in publick; And if any Catholick except againſt you for ſaying ſo, warrant

warrant your ſelf and me out of *Aquinas*, whoſe words are theſe, *Innititur fides naturæ revelationi Apoſtolis & Prophetis factæ, qui Canonicos Libros ſcripſerunt, non autem Revelationi, ſiqua fuit, aliis Doctoribus factæ.* It being granted then, that Churches can err, it remains then in the ſecond place, to conſider how far they may err; I anſwer for Churches as I did before for private Perſons, Churches may err in Fundamentals if they liſt, for they may be heretical, for Churches may be wicked, they may be Idolaters, and why then not heretical? Is Hereſy a more dangerous thing than Idolatry? For whereas it is pleaded, that Churches cannot fall into Hereſie, becauſe of that promiſe of our Saviour, *That the Gates of Hell ſhall*

not

not prevail againſt the Church, is but out of miſtake of the meaning of that place; and indeed I have often muſed how ſo plain a place could ſo long and ſo generally be miſconſtrued: To ſecure you therefore, that you be not abuſed with theſe words hereafter, (for they are often quoted to prove the Churches Infallibility) I ſhall indeavour to give you the natural meaning of them, For πύλαι Ἅδου, the *Gates of Hell*, is an Hebraiſme; for in the Hebrew Expreſſion, the Gates of a thing ſignifies the thing it ſelf, as the gates of *Sion*, *Sion* it ſelf, and by the ſame proportion the gates of Hell ſignifies Hell it ſelf: Now Ἅδης which we Engliſh Hell, as in no place of Scripture it ſignifies Hereſie, ſo very frequently in Scripture it ſigni-

ſignifies Death, or rather the ſtate of the dead, and indifferently applied to good and bad; Let us then take the Word in that meaning, for what greater means can we have to warrant the ſignification of a Scripture word, than the general meaning of it in Scripture? So that when our Saviour ſpake theſe words, he made no promiſe to the Church of perſevering in the Truth, but to thoſe that did perſevere in the Truth he made a promiſe of victory againſt death and hell; And what he there ſays, ſounds to no other purpoſe, but this, that thoſe who ſhall continue his, although they dy, yet death ſhall not have the Dominion over them; but the time ſhall come, that the bands of Death ſhall be broken; and as Chriſt is riſen, ſo

ſhall

ſhall they that are his riſe again to Immortality: For any help therefore that this Text affords, Churches may err in Fundamentals. But to ſpeak the Truth, I much wonder, not only how any Churches, but how any private man, that is careful to know and follow the Truth, can err in Fundamentals: For ſince it is moſt certain, that the Scripture contains at leaſt the Fundamental Parts of Chriſtian Faith, how is it poſſible, that any Man, that is careful to ſtudy and believe the Scripture, ſhould be ignorant of any neceſſary part of his Faith? Now whether the Church of *Rome* err in Fundamentals, yea or no? To anſwer this, I muſt crave leave to uſe this Diſtinction; To err in Fundamentals, is either to be ignorant

Errors in Fundamentalibus.

of

of, or deny ſomething to be fundamental that is, or to entertain ſomething for Fundamental, which is not. In the firſt ſenſe, the Church of *Rome*, entertaining the Scriptures as ſhe doth, cannot poſſibly be ignorant of any principal part of Chriſtian Faith; all her error is, in entertaining in her ſelf, and obtruding upon others, a multitude of things for Fundamentals, which no way concern our Faith at all: Now how dangerous it is thus to do, except I know whether ſhe did this willingly or wittingly, yea or no, is not eaſy to define: If willingly ſhe doth it, it is certainly high and damnable preſumption, if ignorantly, I know not what mercies God hath in ſtore for them that ſin not out of malitious wickedneſs,

neſs. Now concerning the merriment newly ſtarted; I mean the requiring of a Catalogue of Fundamentals, I need to anſwer no more, but what *Abraham* tells the rich man in Hell, *Habent Moſen & Prophetas*, They have *Moſes*, and the Prophets, the Apoſtles, and the Evangeliſts, let them ſeek them there; for if they find them not there, in vain ſhall they ſeek them in all the World beſides. But yet to come a little nearer to the Particulars; If the Church of *Rome* would needs know what is Fundamental, in our conceit, and what not, the Anſwer, as far as my ſelf in Perſon am concerned in the Buſineſs, ſhall be no other than this; Let her obſerve what Points they are, wherein

wherein we agree with her, and let her think, if ſhe pleaſe, that we account of them as Fundamentals, eſpecially if they be in the Scriptures; and on the other hand, let her mark in what Points we refuſe Communion with her, and let her aſſure her ſelf, we eſteem thoſe as no Fundamentals. If ſhe deſire a Liſt and Catalogue made of all thoſe, ſhe is at leiſure enough, for ought I know, to do it her ſelf.

Laſt of all, Concerning the imputation of Rebellion and Schiſm againſt Church-Authority, with which your Catholick Diſputant meant to affright you; all that is but meerly Powder without Shot, and can never hurt you; For ſince it hath been ſufficiently evidenced unto us, that the Church of *Rome* hath adulterated the Truth of God,

by

by mixing with it ſundry Inventi-ons of her own; it was the Con-ſcience of our duty to God, that made us to ſeparate: For where the Truth of God doth once ſuffer, there Union is Conſpiracy, Au-thority is but Tyranny, & Church-es are but Routs; And ſuppoſe we, that we miſtook, and made our Se-paration upon Error, the Church of *Rome* being right in all her Waies, though we think other-wiſe, yet could not this much pre-judice us; For, it is Schiſm upon wilfulneſs that brings danger with it, Schiſm upon miſtake, and Schiſm upon juſt occaſion, hath in it ſelf little hurt, if any at all.

SIR,

SIR,

I *Return you more than I thought, or you expected; yet leſs than the Argument requir'd: If you ſhall favour me ſo much as to carefully read what I have carefully written, you ſhall find (at leaſt in thoſe Points you occaſioned me to touch upon) ſufficient ground to plant your ſelf ſtrongly againſt all Diſcourſe of the* Romiſh Corner-creepers, *which they uſe for the Seducing of unſtable Souls. Be it much or little that I have done, I require no other reward than the continuance of your good Affection to,*

YOUR SERVANT,

whom you know.